

The Phiz Biz

Making the world a better place, one person at a time

Vol. 6, Issue 5
Mar 09



Courtesy of Aerospace Physiology: Human Performance Training Team

“Magic” pills, powders & potions

Are supplements okay to take? The short answer is: “it depends.” Many times the “evidence” behind the claimed benefit is anecdotal—those stories about people losing 50 lbs because of the supplement are NOT considered good scientific evidence.

The problem is herbs and supplements are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Why the concern? U.S. consumers spend over \$12B per year on supplements to improve their health and performance, yet most of us know little about potential side effects. *Our* top reasons to NOT use supplements (other than one multi-vitamin per day):

“Natural” does not equal safe. Classic example = mahuang, the natural form of ephedrine. To date, the FDA has reported over 40 deaths linked to use of this substance; Cocaine is another good example of “natural does not equal safe.”

There is very little research on long-term health effects or the effect of simultaneously taking multiple supplements. What you don’t know could be detrimental to your health.

Many ingredients used to make supplements can also be found in floor stripper, paint thinner, and

other industrial products. Manufacturers and distributors may distort or exaggerate research findings or overlook negative effects to increase sales.

You may simply be wasting your money—what the body doesn’t need, it dumps. In many cases, the main effect of supplements is producing very expensive urine/fecal matter.

Finally – if you’re going to spend your hard-earned cash on supplements, avoid the “if a little is good, more must be better” approach. Twice as much is not twice as good. In fact, some folks recommend halving the dosage to start off.

It’s not sexy or exciting, but the proven method for excellent health, increased performance, and an awesome physique is consistent exercise, a balanced diet (to include drinking plenty o’ water), and quality rest. There are no short cuts or magic formulas – despite the claims in the muscle mags.

If you are uncertain about the effects of any supplement, talk to your doctor.

What’s the deal with Ephedra?

Ephedra dietary supplements can produce significant side effects in the cardiovascular, nervous and thermoregulatory system.

Personal health risk factors may exacerbate potentially serious Ephedra supplement side effects.

Bottom line: Dietary supplements containing ephedrine alkaloids present an unreasonable risk to public health and are banned under section 402(f)(1)(A) of the FD & C Act

Useless fact of the month: Hummingbirds flap their wings 50-70 times/second

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A 47-year-old sheriff was born to be wild – at least that’s what he wanted to believe. As a motorcycle dude, he thought of himself as an experienced rider and decided to forego donning his helmet to better experience the freedom of the open road. As “The Law” was enjoying his ride, he decided to memorialize the moment by snapping a picture. The good sheriff pulled out his camera and turned around to get a good shot of the guys behind him. As he did, he lost control of his motorcycle and sailed through the air. Probably more “freedom” than he wanted. He ended up breaking his skull, ribs, and shoulder bone, but miraculously survived. He re-learned a valuable (and well known) lesson – helmets prevent injuries and save lives. That’s why the Air Force requires you to wear one. *Also, it’s always a good idea to keep your eyes on the road.*

